

I want to say that 2 years ago, when we dealt with the Hurricane Katrina relief, I am very proud to say that I pushed for an offset in Federal spending at that time. We were faced with spending outside the budget, \$52 billion in one fell swoop, to offer relief to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. We had no good plan for how that money was going to be spent, and we needed a plan. We did not have an offset set up when we first passed that \$52 billion. I urged the Republican Study Committee to demand offsets.

In just a few weeks' period of time, we were able to come up with \$39 billion in offsets to the \$52 billion. We weren't able to come up with \$52 billion, but we came up with \$39 billion. One of my colleagues who gives me the credit for that, calls me the "mother of offsets." It is a title I wear proudly. All of us need to be doing that here in the Congress. We all need to make sure that when we ask for any funding, that we are looking for ways to offset that funding, and certainly any new funding.

Unfortunately, the war supplemental that was passed 3 weeks ago did not have offsets in it because the rules here in the House say that emergency spending, such as the Katrina bill, don't have to have offsets in them; and yet our Democratic colleagues promised that in this session of Congress they would not do what the Republicans did and that was spend outside the budget and expand the growth of the Federal Government.

They just ignored that. They had \$24 billion in new spending, pork-barrel spending, I would call it, spending to buy votes to pass the war supplemental, which were outside the budget and expanded the scope of spending, violating all of the promises that they made last year to do PAYGO. They found ways to get around those promises to pay as you go and not expand spending by putting it within the supplemental which was supposedly for the war and is emergency spending. That, to me, is one of the most cynical things that a person can do.

But as we file our taxes on April 17, we need to imagine the alternatives to piles of tax forms and schedules and endless hours calculating Uncle Sam's take. We need a system that is fair, simple and transparent. It is time for radical change in the way we collect taxes.

The first step is ditching the leviathan code we have inherited from decades of congressional tinkering and start a real tax debate over how to collect taxes responsibly, efficiently and fairly. I challenge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to bring forth legislation that will relieve the burden that so many Americans feel at this time of the year where they have to spend hours and hours and weeks at a time preparing their taxes and paying a lot more out to the Federal Government than we should be paying.

Many years ago I read an article in the Wall Street Journal where they

had done a survey of every segment of our society and asked, what do you think would a fair amount of money that you should be paying to the Federal Government in taxes. Most people felt 25 percent was about the fair amount that they should pay, and they would pay that willingly. But once you get beyond that, then people begin to begrudge it and avoid trying to pay their taxes.

We have way too many people in this country at this stage of the game paying approximately 48 percent of all of their income in taxes at all three levels, so we are at twice the level that most people feel is the fair amount to pay. I think most people would say that much of their money is being wasted. Not only do they think that they should pay only approximately 25 percent, but they want to know that the Federal Government is spending their money wisely.

I want to say that as far as I am concerned what we should be doing at the Federal level is funding primarily defense, the Federal system of interstate highways, and national parks. Beyond that, we should not be doing it.

Our Constitution shows that the things that are not mentioned in the Constitution, and in the 10th amendment we say those things not mentioned in the Constitution are the responsibility of the States. What we have done at the Federal level is we have taken on many, many more responsibilities than the framers and the founders of this country envisioned that we would do. What we need to do is step back, look at what we are funding at the Federal Government level and say, is it constitutional, is it something that we should be funding, and if not, then how can we get out of funding this and allow the States to do it. If it is a project that is worthy to be funded, then the States and localities should be doing it and not the Federal Government.

Our Federal Government was formed to provide for the defense of this Nation. The States and localities cannot do that; only the Federal Government can do it. That is our responsibility.

When people talk about the fact that we are taking money from education and putting it into the war effort, that is not accurate. We should not be funding education at all at the Federal level because that is not one of the parts of the Constitution that we should be funding. So I say if we could take the Federal Government back to its roots, to those things that we should be funding, then we would be able to lower the tax burden tremendously because much of the money that is taken at the Federal level is wasted.

President Jefferson said: "The government which governs least governs best," and I think that is accurate.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today through May 25, 2007.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. SMITH of Nebraska) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, today and April 17, 18, and 19.

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, April 17, 18, and 19.

Mr. PAUL, for 5 minutes, April 17, 18, and 19.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, today and April 17, 18, and 19.

SENATE BILLS REFERRED

Bills of the Senate of the following titles were taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 30. An act to intensify research to derive human pluripotent stem cell lines; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

S. 229. An act to redesignate a Federal building in Albuquerque, New Mexico, as the "Raymond G. Murphy Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center"; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

S. 801. An act to designate a United States courthouse located in Fresno, California, as the "Robert E. Coyle United States Courthouse"; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

S. 1104. An act to increase the number of Iraqi and Afghani translators and interpreters who may be admitted to the United States as special immigrants; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The SPEAKER pro tempore, Mr. VAN HOLLEN on Wednesday, April 11, 2007, announced his signature to an enrolled bill of the Senate of the following title:

S. 1002. An act to amend the Older Americans Act of 1965 to reinstate certain provisions relating to the nutrition services incentive programs.

□ 1600

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 1 minute p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, April 17, 2007, at 10:30 a.m., for morning hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1035. A letter from the Principal Deputy Under Secretary, Personnel and Readiness,